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DOH investigating Red Hill release of fuel and water mixture

HONOLULU – The Hawai'i Department of Health (DOH) was notified this afternoon of a release of approximately 30 gallons of a fuel and water mixture from a maintenance line connected to Tank 15 at the Red Hill Bulk Fuel Storage Facility. The U.S. Navy reported the release occurred during a maintenance activity. The fuel and water mixture was recovered in Sump 2.

The release occurred during maintenance work to remove water from the underground storage tanks, an environmental control measure to avoid corrosion in the tanks. As specified in DOH's December 6, 2021 Emergency Order, the Navy is required to maintain environmental controls. DOH confirmed that the Navy had spill lookouts with radios, absorbent materials, and sandbags on site.

DOH was notified of the release around 3:00 PM. DOH On-Scene Coordinators responded and saw the Navy had deployed absorbent material to recover the fuel and water mixture. Preliminary observations are consistent with a 30-gallon release as reported by the Navy. Fresh staining was observed around Sump 2, but appeared to be localized.

"DOH responded to the incident immediately after we were notified," said Kathleen Ho, Deputy Director of Environmental Health. "Today's event underscores the importance of DOH and other regulatory agencies having oversight of Red Hill activities, especially around defueling and decommissioning the facility."

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